

GEORG NÖRREGAARD

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THE ENGLISH PURCHASE  
OF THE DANISH POSSESSIONS

IN THE ÉAST INDIES AND AFRICA

1845 AND 1850



PARIS

*Au siège de la Société : 28, RUE BONAPARTE*

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# THE ENGLISH PURCHASE OF THE DANISH POSSESSIONS IN THE EAST INDIES AND AFRICA

IN 1845 AND 1850

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it is almost forgotten that Denmark was formerly a colonial power of some importance. Of her overseas countries only Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands are still more or less attached to Denmark. The tropical possessions have all been given up or sold. They were acquired originally from economic motives, maritime tradition making it natural for the Danes and the Norwegians to compete for the advantages of colonial trade. It is true, that the Scandinavian nations were not among the first in the field ; but nevertheless they embarked on their undertakings fairly early, and in India, for example, they gained a footing before the French.

The earliest and most important of the Danish settlements in the East Indies was Tranquebar on the Coromandel Coast, acquired by treaty with the Rajah of Tanjore on the 19. November 1620. In course of time the Danes subsequently established various stations in the

Indian Ocean ; but most of them were lost after a short time, and by the year 1845, beside Tranquebar, there were left only the settlement of Frederiksnagore and a station at Balasore, both in Bengal. Frederiksnagore was acquired in 1755 by agreement with a local prince (Mahomed Aliverda Khan, Nabob of Muxedabath), while the first Danish trading station at Balasore dated back to 1625. Further colonizing experiments took place in the Nicobar Islands between 1755 and 1840 ; but owing to the deadly climate all such experiments had to be given up.

The next Danish settlements were made on the Guinea Coast. How early they were so is problematical ; but probably it was about 1650. The first main fort on the Gold Coast, Frederiksborg, was sold to the English in the sixteen eighties ; but another fort called Christiansborg had been founded in 1661 at Accra, and after a series of adventurous changes of the same kind as most other Gold Coast forts experienced, it came to be the stronghold of the Danes, and later on other forts were founded to the east of it along the Coast.

The most valuable of the Danish acquisitions were among the West Indian Islands, of which St. Thomas was finally occupied in 1672, and St. Jan in 1717, while St. Croix was bought from France in 1733. A condition for the prosperity of these Islands was the supply of negro slaves from the African forts, thus there was a certain commercial intercourse between some of the Danish tropical colonies, and for many years the trade was carried on for the profit of the home country <sup>1</sup>.

The East Indian possessions could only be of importance as centres for the Danish trade and the missionary work promoted by the Lutheran Church. Their areas were very limited. Tranquebar Town and District only covered

15 sq. miles, and had in 1835 23,185 inhabitants. Frederiksnagore was much smaller, a little more than 2 sq. miles (4322 Biggahs), but included the Town of Serampore, which was a seat of learning with mission college, paper mill, and printing-establishment, and thus it had in 1840 11,955 inhabitants. The station at Balasore was quite insignificant, about 6 acres (18 Biggahs) with 250 inhabitants. Tranquebar and Serampore for some time produced textiles, and the District of Tranquebar supplied corn, especially paddy; but the settlements yielded very few articles for export, and raw materials had, to a large extent, to be imported<sup>2</sup>.

The natural resources of the African possessions were much greater. Towards 1850 only Danish forts were to be found along the Coast for nearly 100 miles. An English fort Prampram, about 20 miles east of Accra, was not occupied although some trade went on there. How far inland the Danish power reached was — as will appear later — extremely questionable; but the Danes maintained, that there were certain relations with tribes living up to 100 miles from the coast; and the territory under their influence, and thus more or less to be exploited from the Danish forts, may roughly be estimated at 4-500 sq. miles. The population along the coast itself is said to have been 20-30,000 souls, but inland there were numerous well-populated villages, including which the number of natives within Danish territory was estimated at 75-100,000. For comparison the English and Dutch forts reached as far as 200 miles along the Coast, and their sphere of influence was about 6000 sq. miles with circa 275,000 natives.

The point was, however, that this coast-land was one of the best in West Africa. What had originally attracted the Europeans to this part of the coast was gold and ivory

— some gold was still to be had there : but, as the last century has shown, the value of colonies should also become dependent on other products ; and it is apparent from numerous sources that the Danish coast in such respects was of particular interest. This is often clear in the descriptions of the place. Thus in 1816 an English captain reports : “ Accra ..... is certainly the most picturesque, fertile and healthy spot on the whole Coast of Africa. A plain extends some miles in the interior, where you come to hills covered with rich soil, and a beautiful country well wooded and watered, and everything that is necessary for forming a colony, every kind of vegetables grows here and could be produced in any quantity ; there are now a great number of cattle, and herds of buffaloes ; a little in the interior on the plain there is a great quantity and variety of game such as deer, hares, pheasants, Guinea fowls, partridges, pigeons, etc., etc., and every kind of live stock in abundance... the climate of this place is so superior to any other part of the Coast that invalids frequently go there to recover their health ”. Dr. Madden’s report in 1841 runs to the same effect, saying about Accra : “ The soil of the coast is light and sandy, but a few miles inland it is excellent, though there is little cultivation, except of vegetables. The Danes have established a coffee — plantation which is said to produce excellent coffee ”. Dr. Madden recommends the cultivation of coffee, and he confirms the reputation of healthy climate, but adding, that “ nevertheless fever and dysentery prevail there in the wet season ”<sup>3</sup>. The country around the River Volta, which flows into the sea about 60 miles east of Christiansborg, is similarly praised as fertile and valuable, and the English Governor W. Winniett in 1847 adds to such a description that “ almost all the stock, such as sheep, turkeys, ducks, etc., consumed by the European residents



on the Gold Coast " was supplied from the tribes within Danish territory.

Among the produce of the Coast is also mentioned cotton, both as cultivated and growing wild ; but by far the greatest importance was attached to the palm oil, procured from wild palms. Madden says that the trade in palm oil had developed since 1810 and made great progress, the export in 1834 being 269.907 cwts., in 1838 : 282.312 cwts., and in 1849 it was asserted that palm oil was still the staple production of the natives, and that the production had been sixfold increased within the last few years <sup>4</sup>.

The drawback about this attractive country was the natives. The English captain in 1816 praises them, but certainly without reason. They were very savage and warlike, which is quite apparent from the whole history of the Gold Coast. Winniett, who knew them well, says in 1847 that some of them were industrious, others not. Their principal food was dried fish and a kind of bread, made out of Indian corn (cauky). Each village had three or four chiefs (seniors or cabboceers), who acted as magistrates and were responsible for good order and cleanliness ; but many of these potentates seemed cruel. Human sacrifices still went on, and the people required a watchful eye over them.

No doubt Denmark's East Indian possessions had a more productive, more peaceful, and less uneducated population ; but as regards natural resources and possibilities of development, the African coast was decidedly superior.

Now the object of the following piece of research is to trace why the Danish government determined to part with the possessions, and why England bought them.

The final decision on the part of Denmark to sell the

continental possessions in India and the forts in Africa was made by the Royal Ordinance of 2 November 1840, directing the department concerned to dispose of them as soon as opportunity offered<sup>5</sup> ; but already several years earlier plans existed to get rid of them. Thus in the eighteen twenties negotiations went on with England for the sale of Tranquebar and Frederiksnagore, whilst the Nicobar Islands were to be retained, some people still believing that a wonderful colony could be created here. An exchange of the Guinea forts was discussed on two occasions. In 1816 it was planned to cede at least some of the forts to Portugal in return of Prince's Island and St. Thomas, both in the Gulf of Guinea. A Danish captain, Philip W. Wrisberg, inspected them that summer, but nothing happened except that the English on the Coast suspected the Portuguese of being interested in the exchange for the sake of the revival of the slave trade : in no other way was it possible to account for the Portuguese views, the two islands being of particular importance for shipping, as places where fresh provisions and water were always available<sup>6</sup>. Later on, in the eighteen twenties, Sweden proposed to give her West Indian Island St. Bartholomew for the Guinea forts, which would then be used for the deportation of convicts, but the Danish government did not accept the proposal.

The aged Danish Sovereign Frederik VI, during whose reign Norway had been lost, appears to have looked with disfavour upon a diminution of the territory of his realm, and it was not until his successor Christian VIII had followed him in 1839 that the reasons in favour of a sale were considered decisive.

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## WHY DENMARK WAS PREPARED TO SELL

### 1. *Economical Depression.*

The first and the most important reason why Denmark decided to sell colonies and thus to diminish her already very limited territory was the financial and economical depression, in which the Napoleonic wars had left her. Scarcely any other country in Europe experienced worse consequences of these wars. It is true that for a considerable time she succeeded in keeping her neutrality and profiting from the discord of the surrounding nations ; but when Denmark finally had to enter the struggle, it was fatal to her prosperity. The consequences of the war against England in 1807-14 were not only due to the loss of buildings and human lives, or to the loss of the fleet, caused by the premature English expedition against Copenhagen (1807) ; above all they were due to the fact that during the war the Danish trade to overseas countries was completely spoiled through privateering and confiscation. Before 1807 the vessels of the Danish East India Company annually carried home numerous and precious cargoes from India and China. The loss of this source of income was one of the main reasons why the state in 1813 went bankrupt ; all private initiative was suffocated, and the remarkable thing is that this poverty kept the field with such a persistancy, that for years and years capital was lacking for the dispatch of ships to Africa or Asia, while the competition of other nations at the same time

made it much more difficult to trade profitably to these distant places. Only with the West Indian Islands the intercourse was still kept up, and only from there some profits were still taken home.

It is only possible to a small extent to illustrate the decline by statistics ; but for comparison can be mentioned that in 1805 there returned from Eastern Asia 23 vessels, and in 1806, 18 vessels ; already at that time there had been a decrease on account of the growing naval struggle between England and France ; now, in 1816-20, only 4-6 vessels returned annually, and they came mostly from China <sup>7</sup>. A distinguished economist writing in 1832 hardly exaggerates, when he says that not even the shadow of the East Indian trade was left <sup>8</sup>. The Danish East Indian Company itself could rarely afford the equipment of a ship, although it continued to exist until 1843 ; and after the English occupation in 1808-15 the Danish settlements in India were not even annually visited by Danish ships. Strange to say, the Danish Guinea forts were not occupied by the English during that war ; they were allowed to live their own peaceful life <sup>9</sup>, and probably after the war they did not hear from home as often as the East Indian possessions. Denmark has scarcely ever had a government with less courage to start new undertakings and a mercantile class more cautious and more timid. The settlements were only just kept ; nothing was done to make them flourish, and consequently their trades declined, so that they gave no revenue and could not pay their own expenses. The home country had to grant annual subsidies, and for the year 1835 when the Danish budget was first published the East Indian and African settlements were estimated to cost the government the sum of 81.000 Rigsbankdaler (about £ 9000), while now even the West Indies gave only a small profit. What

worse could happen to a country as poor as Denmark was at that time ?

To this can be added that the tropical climate was by no means healthy for the Danes. It was bad enough in the East Indies ; but quite apart from the relative healthiness of Christiansborg it was worse in Africa, and most of the Europeans coming out there died within a few years. It was accordingly difficult to make able individuals accept appointments as governors or assistants, especially on the Gold Coast. A confidential letter from the last Danish governor in Africa, E. J. A. Carstensen, to the contemporary governor of the English Gold Coast possessions, Winniett, after having communicated one more death among the Danes of the settlement gives evidence of this difficulty. No doubt moved by the fear of being overtaken by a similar fate the governor tries to hasten the sale of the settlement, and he finishes the letter : “ Let me beseech you, my dear Sir, to pay due attention to this matter of vital importance to me ”.

The Indian and African settlements had become fantastical monsters, annually demanding their tribute of money and human lives, without adequate return.

## 2. *The Encircled Position in India.*

Beside these obstacles for the home country there were both in India and Africa local circumstances which highly impeded the development of the settlements. In both places relations with the English had to be considered ; but there was the difference that while affairs in India seemed to go on peacefully, in Africa they did not end without frictions.

During the first 120 years of the Danes in India the

other Europeans had, of course, caused them some trouble ; but their territory was not contiguous with the Danish possessions, and little danger threatened from the native states. When the Europeans began extending their territories, the situation became quite different. Thus in 1739 the French took possession of Karikal, thus reaching the river that formed the Danish frontier to the south. It is true that the Danes remained neutral during the wars which raged for long periods of the 18. century ; but they did not escape from the consequences of the establishment of English supremacy. The leading people of Tranquebar did not remain ignorant of the danger ; they tried to extend the Danish territory by lending money to native princes and in return receiving new territories in mortgage ; but it was too late. Before the expiration of the time given for payment the English obtained a hold over the native affairs, paid the loans, and had the territories handed back.

Consequently both the Danish stations became completely enclosed, when the surrounding tracts came under English rule. This happened first to Serampore, during the years 1756-64, when the English, especially through the battles of Plassey in 1757 and of Buxar in 1764, got the upper hand not only over all French and Dutch on the Indian continent, but also over some native states — more or less detached parts of the empire of the great mogul — the result being that Bengal now in reality was controlled by the English East India Company, even if the native authorities retained a nominal rule for many years.

During the same period a second group of important events in the Anglo-French struggle went on along the Coromandel Coast, abundantly interwoven with complications between native states, and now and then Tranque-

bar was threatened. After the war the English had a considerable influence in Tanjore ; but their superiority did not become decisive until they were triumphant in the Mysore wars. The various annexations after the third Mysore war (1790-92) secured for them good footholds in Southern India, and after the fourth Mysore war Tanjore itself was annexed in 1799. The last nominal rajah did not die until 1855.

Both in the years 1801-02 and id 1808-15 the Danish East Indian possessions were occupied by the English ; but even during such circumstances the English customs boundaries around the settlements were maintained, and thus their prosperity was constantly made precarious. The last Danish governor in India, P. Hansen, emphasized with abundant justification that the settlements were too narrow both as military stations and as staples for the trade. Local difficulties could not be avoided, of course, but peace and friendship seem to have been undisturbed. One of the questions was settled in the beginning of the eighteen twenties, so that the English Company had to pay 15.000 Sicca Rupies (about 16.000 Company's Rupees) annually to the Danish government in order to obtain salt monopoly ; the Danish salt distilleries had before that time held this monopoly ; but now they were to close down, and the English to supply salt to a reasonable price. Further negotiations went on, the Danes vainly hoping to get rid of the English export duties on raw textile materials.

While industry and trade were thus checked and gradually declined, there seemed to be no possibility that the settlements would ever again become flourishing and progressive.

### 3. *The Discussion Concerning the African Frontier.*

Circumstances concerning the Danish possessions on the Gold Coast offer a much more interesting story. In fact they form one of the preludes to the disagreements concerning Africa towards the end of the 19. century, and at the same time they illustrate the relation between a great power and a small power in modern times<sup>10</sup>.

Beside England and Denmark, Holland also since the seventeenth century had possessed several forts on the Gold Coast. They were interspersed between the English forte and naturally caused some trouble to the English, while the Danes seem to have had no conflict with them during the later decades of their time on the Coast.

Now the point is that on the coast of the little negro state Accra all three nations had each a fort within gunshot of one another. To the west was the English fort St. James, next came the Dutch fort Creve Cœur, and to the east was the Danish Fort Christiansborg, which was the largest and strongest. Around each of the forts lived some natives, each group connected to one or other of the European nations ; but the great question was who had most supremacy over the tribes in the interior of the country. The most important of these were the tribes of Krobbó (the Krobbó Mountains rise a little to the north of Accra and stretch to the N-NE.), Akim, Akwapim and Akwambo (the last group around the River Volta) ; a detailed indication where these peoples lived cannot be given from the available information — probably they had no place of constant habitation, but moved from place to place to suit their own convenience.

International law on the Coast of Africa was always



highly questionable and dubious. In fact, none of the Europeans seem to have had any title to interfere with the affairs of these negro tribes. Originally they had, in Africa as well as in India, for an annual rent hired the ground, on which they had erected their forts, and European law ruled within the precincts of the forts, but not outside. Therefore one must beware of thinking that the Gold Coast had been divided up into colonies or dominions under such and such a European state. In reality the Europeans were tenants, and the annual rent to the natives in the case of the English did not come to an end until 1826, when they after a great victory began to consider themselves owners of the ground, on which their forts stood <sup>41</sup>. To territory outside the forts the Europeans had still no right. That this conception holds good in theory appears abundantly clear from the work of W. W. Claridge. It was maintained with profit, when it came to be known, a long time after the abolition of slavery in 1833, that slaves were kept for debt near the English forts, and Dr. Madden stated in 1842 that there was an exercise of authority over the natives, whose "soil we seem to consider ours, and yet where we positively have no territorial right". According to his conception the natives did not acknowledge the right of the English to punish them.

However, theory is one thing, and power another. It is interesting to follow how the English, little by little contrived to get dominion and jurisdiction over the negro tribes. Also the Danes tried to attach the black people to their cause, in part by the distribution of money, donations and flags, in part by the establishment of jurisdiction, and there certainly was some intercourse between the Danes and the tribes in question.

How matters went on in former times is doubtful. The

English governor Maclean asserted in 1838 that up to the Anglo-Dutch war in 1780-85 the tribes were attached to Holland ; but during this war the English conquered all the Dutch forts except Elmina, and he states that although the forts were restored to the States General by the treaty of peace, the Dutch did not reoccupy the forts east of Accra.

Now there never seems to have been any Dutch fort east of Christiansborg (even if there may have been unfortified stations), consequently the statement can only be applied to possible stations and Fort Creve Cœur. During a period from about 1816 to about 1830 this fort was not occupied, and thus it is sure that the Dutch influence came to an end. From this fact Maclean comes to the untenable conclusion that if nobody else had dominion over the tribes in question, they belonged to the English by the force of conquest.

The other historical considerations on the part of Maclean are generally just as unsubstantial. The fact is that in the seventeen eighties the Danes perceived that, now that the danger of Dutch rivalry had been eliminated, the opportunity had come for expansion to the east. Therefore they founded Fort Kongensten at Adda on the River Volta in 1783, Fort Prinsensten at Kitta in 1784 and Fort Augustaborg at Teshi in 1787. Native resistance was crushed by force, and Danish influence continued unabated down to the war in 1807, when reinforcements ceased to come from home.

From about that time a new power became superior. The King of Ashanti acquired supremacy over most of the tribes on the Gold Coast, until combined native and European actions in 1824-26 drove him back. The decisive peace after these wars was arranged by Maclean in 1831, and the problem now is to discover to whom the tribes in question belonged after the Ashanti period.

An alteration had just taken place in the system of government of the English possessions, the main influence coming to reside in the London merchants trading to the Coast, and Maclean had just been appointed governor in order that he should, above all, promote the mercantile interests, i. e. create peace. By the skill with which he contrived to support the English cause and make the negroes keep quiet he succeeded for a series of years in creating the best possible conditions for the progress of trade and civilization and secured for himself a prominent position among so-called " Empire-Builders ". Even Dr. Madden, who was sent out to criticise him, admitted that " the influence of fear and to a certain extent that of the character of the present governor for the impartiality of his decisions in their " palavers " (peace-meetings), is the only hold we have on the natives " ; but, as will be seen from the following, his ideas of justice were completely determined by his care for the English trade, and can only be understood and appreciated from that point of view.

The methods which the merchants wanted him to adopt received ample illustration from a small affair in 1830. The English of Fort St. James had fired a gun close ahead of an east-going Danish canoe, demanding that vessels coming from the west should first call at their fort. As a consequence a correspondence took place between the commanders of Fort Christiansborg and Fort St. James, and the case was referred to London ; but the merchants answered that Danish ships should, of course, be allowed to call at the Danish fort before at the English one, and they added : " We cannot help expressing our regret with you, that this question appears to us to be calculated only to produce quarrels, and we strongly recommend a continuance of that good understanding, mutual acco-

modation and freedom of trade, which have hitherto existed, and we are convinced will be found most advantageous to all parties ” <sup>12</sup>.

Now, it happened that the commander of the Danish possessions from 1834 to 1839, Fr. S. Morck, was a man, who, from the beginning, was just as active and as patriotic as Maclean. Most previous Danish governors had died or returned to Europe after a short time, and had paid little attention to the maintenance or the expansion of the Danish trade and influence. In 1842, a German missionary, who lived for eight years on the Coast, described Morck to the English charge d'affaires at Copenhagen as “ one of the most unprincipled profligates that ever existed, who having given himself up to drinking in company with merchants who were indirectly interested in the slave trade, he was of course obliged to shut his eyes to their proceedings. This Mr. Morck was dismissed from the French navy, was unmanageable in the Danish navy, from whence he was transferred to the governorship of the Gold Coast, where he fell a victim to his vices ”. It is apparently true that Morck degenerated towards the end ; but it certainly was not so in the beginning. Disparaging descriptions always became worse before they reached Europe. In London similar gossip went on simultaneously about Maclean — completely without justification. In reality Morck endeavoured at first to promote planting, to keep peace between the negroes and to draw the trade into Danish hands. Therefore it is only to be expected that Maclean and Morck clashed. The discord began on a small scale ; but the seed, thus sowed, grew luxuriantly, and from their time a continued jealousy existed between the English and the Danes on the Coast.

The trouble really began in 1835, an old affair providing the occasion. The Danish part of the peace with

Ashanti had quickly become quite confused, owing to the hasty changes among the Danish officials on the settlement. The English treaty of peace, dated the 27. April 1831, does not contain anything about the Danes, and all that Claridge can tell of this matter is that some messengers from the tribes in question as well as from some coastal natives, decidedly under Danish protection, arrived too late at one of the preliminary peace negotiations at Cape Coast Castle in 1827. The names of these tribes are not mentioned in the English treaty.

The reason is that the Danes signed their own treaty of peace with Ashanti on the 9. August 1831, a treaty almost similar in content to the English treaty. Previously an Anglo-Danish agreement had been made, signed by W. Lind, the Danish governor, on the 22. February 1830, and by Maclean three days later. According to this the parties promised not to conclude a separate peace with Ashanti, except upon conditions, which would be the same for both of them; one paragraph provided that the treasure which they could make the King of Ashanti deposit as security for his future good conduct, should be lodged, one moiety at Cape Coast Castle, and the other moiety at Fort Christiansborg.

Later on, however, this agreement, owing to "various circumstances", was altered so that the whole treasure had to be kept by the English, while the Danes received in return a solemn bond, engaging that their moiety would be delivered up to them, if ever the Danish governor found "that there had been the slightest infraction on the part of the King of Ashanti or his subjects on the treaty of peace". This security amounted to 600 ounces of gold, which was to be paid back after 6 years.

Whatever may be the reason, the Danish governors during the following years made repeated efforts to have

this bond revised, so that they could have the 300 ounces disbursed ; but Maclean obstinately refused to consent to this, reminding the Danes that they had paid none of the expenses subsequent to the agreement. The chief point, however, is that this question caused a correspondence between Morck and Maclean at the beginning of the year 1835. The two men took the opportunity of charging one another with deliberate misinterpretation of one another's letters, and finally the case had to be referred to the decision of the home authorities <sup>13</sup>.

The mutual animosity soon found other subjects for dispute.

What really happened was this : In 1835 Morck went to the Krobbo Mountains for the sake of his health and in order to start plantations. During his stay here a controversy arose between Krobbo and Akwapim, which lasted for a long time before an adjustment of it took place in 1872.

There can be little doubt that Morck wanted peace as well as Maclean ; but his mediation was in vain, and therefore he gathered people and helped Akwapim. A battle was fought on the 12. January 1836, and Krobbo were beaten, after which they consented to peace, and promised to pay the expenses of war.

Considering that the palm oil was their only article of export they decided to sell it to the Danish merchants for a certain period in order to get the money demanded. Morck insisted on not having influenced this decision ; but in order to be sure that the oil was really brought to the Danes, some soldiers were posted at the " paths " — the local routes of trade — between Krobbo and the English stations.

Apparently it was the English who used to buy this palm oil from Krobbo. Probably the war had also in

other respects disturbed the trade of Prampram and British Accra. At any rate the English became excited about it.

A meeting is said to have taken place between Morck and Maclean, but nothing was agreed upon. Morck said that Krobbo and Akwapim were Danish subjects, with whom the English had no title to interfere ; but this was denied by the English.

It appears that about this time the English merchants at Accra wished to bring the tribes under English influence. A letter from them says that some natives — indeed the greater part of them — had Danish flags, and the Danes called them their subjects, and some (“ we do not know exactly at this moment how many villages ”) had English flags, and they traded with English and Danes indiscriminately. The merchants would rather that all of them were British, or at least that they could be declared independent of the Danes <sup>14</sup>.

Thus the case was referred to the home authorities ; but although the letter from the British residents at Accra is quite fair in its expressions, the letter in which the African merchants in London transmitted it to the Colonial Office is quite different. Maybe the latter was inspired by Maclean. He stayed in London from the summer of 1836 to the summer of 1838 ; Claridge says that it was because of his health, but the fact that the stay lasted for just this period, seems to indicate that it had some connection with the question dealt with here.

The merchants put the matter, as if it were Morck who had caused the whole trouble, and they said that he had “ thrown the district in the rear of our settlement at Accra into a state of contention by fomenting warfare between the Akwapims and Krobboes, two industrious tribes of people, and upon both of whom our settlement much

depends for their provisions and commerce ". And about the occupation of the " paths " : " Our commandant states that he cannot quietly permit so unwarrantable a proceeding on the part of the Danes and thus the peace of the European settlements is endangered ". " We are apprehensive that these proceedings on the part of the Danish governor will involve the extensive districts in question in a tedious and sanguinary war which would be ruinous to the commercial interests of the British resident merchants and to the increasing prosperity of that portion of the Coast ". Finally the merchants expressed the desire that Morck should be instructed from his government " to desist from a line of conduct which sets the natives of the Gold Coast in angry collision, rouses their worst passion, and becomes destructive to the British commercial interest and influence in that quarter ".

The Colonial Office arrived at the conclusion that the disputed tribes were independent, and consequently the case was sent to the Foreign Office to be made the object of diplomatic representations to Copenhagen.

In the meantime the state of unrest continued on the Coast. The Chief of Akwapim had dealings with the English and bound himself to live at British Accra. Therefore Morck interfered vigorously and set up another chief, which caused new troubles, and later on Morck captured the pro-English chief with all his household and imprisoned them at Christiansborg, till they acknowledged the new potentate. During this period the English more than once took occasion to implore the home authorities to induce the Danish government to curtail Morck's activities.

The Danish government did not hurry. The representation by the English minister at Copenhagen, Wynn, took place in February 1837 ; a careful investigation was



undertaken ; Morek's opinion was sent for, and the note in reply was not ready until the 31. March 1838. More remarkable is the manner in which the complaint was first received. The Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Krabbe-Carisius, initially stated that he shared Palmers-ton's views about how governors ought to behave, and next he exhibited what can hardly be considered as anything but an astonishing piece of diplomatic foolishness. He appears to be one of the least prominent foreign ministers Denmark has had. He was rather old, and indeed it happened several times that he had not a correct perception of the aims of his own government. Thus it is characteristic that it was not communicated to him when it was decided to sell the colonies. On the occasion dealt with here, his desire to seem obliging to England completely outran his discretion.

Kaj Larsen's assertion is quite sound, where he says that if the Danish government had supported the measures of Governor Morck, the Danish settlement would probably have existed to the present day and had a considerable extent ; but behold, in stead of supporting or at least making use of due discretion, Krabbe-Carisius, according to Wynn's despatch, added that he had no doubt it would be found to be an excess of zeal on the part of the government, which would not be approved of ; that no great prudence could be expected from a lieutenant of the navy, and yet they could not place the government in more experienced hands, as from the deadly unhealthiness of the climate, no one of higher standing, or any one who had the prospect of the means of existence at home would undertake it ”.

This pronouncement was sent to the Coast as a temporary consolation to the English there.

The decisive reply from Denmark was rather different.

It said that Denmark was very far from intending to prohibit the negro tribes placed under her dominion, from trading with the English. Denmark had no desire to draw to herself any monopoly. What Morck did in 1836 was only to suppress a riot among the Krobboes. Except during the Ashanti period Akim, Akwapim and Krobbo had since 1781 and 1784 accepted the Danish supremacy, which had been recognized by the neighbouring English and Dutch. The chiefs of the tribes received “des appointement reguliers”, and the Danish Government had bought from them the property of the uncultivated grounds.

On the English side it had been claimed that the tribes in question had concluded an alliance with England at the end of the Ashanti war. The Danish government retorted that this war had been principally an English undertaking; The Danes and the tribes, dependent on them, had only been auxiliary troops; but the victory was to a large extent due to their effective assistance. The following peace did not affect the interests of the Danish settlement, and the tribes that had taken part in the fight returned to their former position; but, as the note states at the end, the urgent question was how far the said tribes were to be considered as free, as dependant on England or as dependant on Denmark.

This argument was laid before Maclean, who was still in London, and who now gave his opinion in detail. Starting from the assumption, as mentioned, that the other tribes originally belonged to the Dutch, he states that a large portion of the Krobboes “have from time immemorial looked upon themselves as British subjects, and the remainder were up to the year 1784 attached to the Netherlands’ flag, and the several chiefs were in the habit of receiving, as is the custom in that part of Africa, periodical presents from the respective governments as an

acknowledgement of the connection between them". When Krobbho hoisted these flags, Morck excited Akwapim against them, and Akwapim not only massacred all the Krobbhoes who fell into their hands (according to Danish sources the Krobbhoes had 42 dead and about 70 badly wounded on the 12. January 1836), but devastated their country and destroyed whole forests of palm trees, so that the trade came to an end, and the negroes could not pay their debt to the British merchants. The English authorities only desired to keep the trade going and not to exercise any supremacy over Krobbho, nor Akim and Akwapim.

Concerning these two peoples, Maclean says that the Danes had never the slightest connection with them until about the year 1800, when, by means of bribes, they induced them to join in an attack against a third party. In 1824, upon promises of support from the British, they threw off the Ashanti yoke, hoisted the British flag and were received into British pay. They ought to be considered independent, "their independence having been achieved by the powerful aid of the British government and ratified with the treaty of peace" in 1831. If the peoples had wished merely to place themselves under Danish protection, Maclean would not have raised objections, but he pointed out that they had repeatedly appealed to the British authorities for help against Morck.

Another letter expresses Maclean's annoyance, when it was communicated from the Coast that the Danish home government had approved of Morck's doings appointed him governor-in-chief in stead of lieutenant governor and decorated him as Knight of the Order of Dannebrog.

These two papers, the Danish note and Maclean's reply, are the main documents of the discussion. The significant points of the argument are the alliances between the

English and the tribes in question. Later on, in 1843, the English Foreign Office got hold of a letter from a former resident of the Coast, saying that the English governor Mac Carthy (1822-24) had concluded treaties with the native states, and in 1830, the chiefs gave allegiance to the British government and renewed the alliance in order to obtain peace with Ashanti. The Foreign Office tried by application to the Colonial Office to find these treaties, but in vain.

Apparently such treaties between the English and Akim, Akwapim or Krobbó have never existed. There is a possibility that the English supported these tribes with money ; but to the great damage of Maclean's argument, no proof has been found of Mac Carthy's treaty or of the participation of the tribes in question in the English treaty of 1831 with Ashanti, or of their petition for help against Morek. The objective point of view may be that formally all the tribes were independent. Both the English and the Danish home governments allowed this possibility. But it must be supposed, however, that the treaty of peace of the 9. August 1831 between Ashanti and the Danes established just as close relations between the Danes and the tribes in question (if they were mentioned there) as existed between the English and several tribes mentioned in their treaty. The Danish influence was natural for these tribes living just north of the Danish coast, and the intimate trade between the English and Krobbó could reasonably be counter-balanced by the various sorts of intercourse between Krobbó and the Danes.

Consequently the Danish note is more justified than Maclean reply ; but nevertheless Maclean's conception played a great part in the subsequent discussion.

First of all his considerations were sent to the Danish government and the desire expressed that Morck should

be instructed to keep the peace, and finally Denmark issued such an instruction but no arrangement of a frontier was made. Nothing happened for some time. Morck died in 1839, and what can be considered a fair reproach against him, is that his drinking led to so early a death, while Maclean, by his longer life, made himself the keeper of tradition, with the result that his conception afterwards predominated.

Several years elapsed, before a new Danish governor came out, and during that time Danish affairs had more or less to take care of themselves under the guidance of assistants as governors *pro tem*. Dr. Madden reported that very few tribal people around British Accra were under British influence, and that considerable towns in the interior acknowledged Danish supremacy. The English merchants, on the other hand, were anxious to adopt Maclean's conception, and their endeavours influenced largely the course of later events.

When, finally, a Danish governor was in prospect, the English did their best to have a more amenable individual; a certain Mr Wilkens was appointed, and the English *chargé d'affaires* at Copenhagen reported carefully: "All I heard of Mr. Wilkens is much in his favour — that he is a peaceable and well-principled young man, and anxious in every way to be on a friendly footing with the British authorities at Accra". Nevertheless, for the sake of security, the minister under whose charge the Danish colonies were, was called upon to give Wilkens "such orders... as might lead to the establishment of the most friendly relations between (him) and the governor of British Accra". The English *chargé d'affaires* proposed that the Colonial Office should give the commander of Fort St. James similar instructions, and that Wilkens on his way through London, should be induced not to be preju-

diced against Maclean ". Degrading for Denmark is that he simply suggested that Wilkens be given a letter of introduction to Maclean.

However, Wilkens died in the summer of the same year, and the governorship was taken over by E. J. A. Carstensen, who, with one interruption, became the last Danish governor in Africa. He had a stronger constitution, and he resumed the task left by Morck.

As a consequence the whole question was soon revived. Within a short time Maclean reported that Carstensen was tempering with Akwapim and the surrounding tribes in order to obtain territorial rights. He also wrote that he would not acknowledge such rights, while he avoided any direct collision with him. The merchants in London highly approved of this, and, moreover, they suggested, both to Maclean and to the Colonial Office, that a closer relation should be established to the oft-mentioned tribes, and commercial treaties concluded with them <sup>45</sup>. The Foreign Office approved of these suggestions.

The Colonial Office now undertook an investigation of the whole problem ; an account of it was compiled <sup>46</sup>, and the whole argument from 1838 again brought to light. The reason for this lay in the current rumours that France was going to buy the Danish possessions — a matter that shall be dealt with later on. This prospect made the frontier question very important, and the English government had to consider it seriously. Its attitude appears from a long note added to the account. The note is signed J. S(tephen) and dated the 15. March 1834, and it runs : " The result I am afraid is to show, that the (English) purchase has more to recommend it than might at first sight appear. Nobody doubt the right of the Danes to their forts, nor their right to sell them. All that is doubtful is their right of sovereignty over the adjacent tribes and

territory, When once the French have bought the forts they will have no difficulty in making good the other pretention. A very little skill is all that is required to make out the title of any European state to sovereignty over savage tribes — that is to make it out argumentatively so far as to reduce to silence any other European state which denies it. Of all nations in the world England is the most accessible to this sort of *ad homines* argument, because in every part of the globe we have furnished examples, which our adversaries would allege against us in support of the doctrine that the European race are entitled to command and that other races are bound to obey. However successful our reasoning with the Danes ten years ago (must mean : in the preceding decade), it would be vain to persuade France now that if she buys these forts she will have no right to assert the adjacent sovereignty. Indeed I suppose that it would be but bad policy to moot the question at all with them as it would be to whet their appetite for the purchase ”.

The case was laid before the Foreign Office accompanied by extensive enclosures. Among others Dr. Madden had, as a consequence of the Danes intending to sell, been instructed to report on the Danish forts, and now he strongly recommended the purchase. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Stanley, however, proposed not to offer Denmark any amount for the forts; but he suggested for consideration “ whether it might not be expedient to make some further communication to the Government of Denmark on the subject of these claims with the view of preventing any future misunderstanding in regard to them in the event of the transfer of the Danish forts to any other power ”.

Consequently it was communicated to Wynn at Copenhagen <sup>17</sup> that the English government had formerly

supported Maclean against the Danes, " though not distinctly disclaiming the right of sovereignty set up by the governor of the Danish possessions on the Gold Coast ", and now Wynn was instructed to make the representation " that Her Majesty's Government can not admit any foreign power to whome the forts may be transferred to have any right in virtue of a title from Denmark to interfere with the native tribes or to interrupt the commerce of the British subjects on the Western Coast of Africa ". To this was added that the English government expected a note in reply, " founded upon the frankness and sense of justice of the Danish government... expressing formally the concurrence of Denmark in this declaration ". Further, Wynn in his note expressed the desire that new instructions should be sent to Mr. Carstensen " to be more cautious, than he appears disposed to be, to avoid in his intercourse with the native tribes all cause of collision between the British and Danish authorities ".

On this occasion Denmark had a more careful foreign minister, Reventlow-Criminil. Wynn was told at an interview that no steps whatever had been taken in pursuance of the Royal Resolution of sale ; the English should have the preemption, but there were reasons to believe that France or Belgium would be disposed to treat for the forts. Finally Reventlow-Criminil said that " he himself was no advocate of the sale, as the annual charge for their maintenance was not very great, and circumstances might hereafter arise, rendering them of importance to Danish commerce ".

There seems to be no further answer from Denmark. As it was the Danish government probably did not feel obliged to enter upon further discussion of the question. The problem was no more solved than in 1838. The home



governments left it open, and no further diplomatic interference has been traced.

On the Coast itself the difficulty could not be escaped from, of course. On commercial affairs, however, no open conflict between the English and the Danish authorities appears to have taken place, although the Danes in 1847 bombarded Kitta, and thus caused loss to some English merchants; but now, as the European influence increased, the question became where to draw the frontier between English and Danish jurisdiction. Governor Winniett (1846-50) came to the conclusion that some of the tribes decidedly preferred English jurisdiction, and as late as in 1849 the governments became involved in correspondence about that. A native had committed some crime; but the Danish lieutenant governor, R. E. Smidt, applied for his deliverance, saying that the crime had taken place on Danish territory. Smidt declared that the diplomatic discussion which had taken place had not altered the actual state of affairs, and that the English government would have to prove its claims. Fitzpatrick, the English judge, refused the deliverance of the native, referring to the diplomatic correspondence, and saying: "You labour under a mistake... your government at home does not assert it". He also said that the existing chief of Akwapim had spent seven years of the early part of his life as a hostage in the hands of the British government at Accra, and there "he with his mother, the queen regent, and chiefs together with the chiefs of Akwapim acknowledged themselves under British protection and jurisdiction and solemnly promised obedience to the British authorities; since that time the British government has continuously exercised its authority over these territories".

How far this story fits in with what has been told of the chiefs of Akwapim is open to question; but it seems to

indicate that the English had obtained their intercourse with Akwapim under very strange conditions, perhaps by use of pure compulsion.

In his letter to London about the correspondance with the Danes Fitzpatrick says that he had personally, as formerly Maclean did, given judgment upon several cases amongst the natives of Akim, and even the Chief of Akim, when summoned, had appeared by his messenger. This charge having been a criminal one, the Chief was asked to appear in person ; but this order he had not obeyed upon the pretext that he was under Danish protection. Fitzpatrick adds : “ His case however, is so clear that when a fitting opportunity offers I shall have him arrested and see that he gives good security for his conduct ”.

Fitzpatrick also states that he has not been able to find any records on the connection of Akim and Akwapim with Great Britain <sup>48</sup>.

His argument was the last word to be said about the question. His correspondance with R. E. Smidt was printed in “ British and Foreign State Papers ”. Although the Danes about 1830 possessed the same — and indeed better possibilities than the English, for the extension of their dominion over the interior parts of the country near the Gold Coast, they were, because of the lack of colonial interests and diplomatic genius within the home government, brought by arguments to so questionable a position, that their influence could soon be reduced to the narrow stretch of land along the Coast. The easiest way out from the difficulties was to sell the possessions to the English.

#### *4. Troubles Caused by the Abolition of the Slave Trade.*

In connection with the Gold Coast there also appear other problems which, however, cannot all of them be illustrated in full.

There can be little doubt that when England in the first half of the 19. century made so great efforts to abolish the slave trade and slavery, it is, above all, due to a public opinion in the home country, promoted by an admirably unselfish humanity. This public opinion expressed itself through books and papers; but first of all it influenced Parliament, and in that way it led to effective diplomatic and naval measures. A long series of treaties was concluded with or forced on the interested powers, and as a whole no nation did more for the abolition of slavery than England.

However, there, can be just as little doubt that England had no more well-meaning helper than Denmark. Danish public opinion as well as the Danish government were at least as decided enemies of the slave trade as any Englishman. Denmark was the first country to dissociate itself from the slave trade, a Royal Ordinance of 1792 prohibiting the Danish subjects from buying slaves in Guinea and carrying them to America after 1803. No doubt the good profit, once enjoyed by Denmark from her African possessions mostly came from the slave trade, and consequently the Royal Ordinance was of fatal importance for the Danish trade to Africa, but it was highly appreciated by the English.

Cooperation was natural for England and Denmark concerning this cause. By the treaty of peace of 14. January 1814 the Danish monarch readily agreed to prohibit all his

subjects from trading in slaves, and just as readily he, later on, acceded by the treaty of 26. July 1834 to the French-English treaties of 30. July 1831 and 22. March 1833, according to which the signatory powers mutually allowed their men-of-war to search vessels covered by their flags, in order to see how far they contained slaves<sup>19</sup>.

Down to the eighteen thirties a good understanding was maintained. Nor was it discovered that the Danish flag was ever made use of for illegal traffic in slaves during this period<sup>20</sup>. In 1822 it was communicated to England that forged papers, pretended to be French, had been made in the Danish island of St. Thomas in the West Indies for slave traders, and when this case was referred to Denmark, a Danish examination of it resulted in the conclusion that the charge was "wholly groundless"<sup>21</sup>.

From the emancipation of the British slaves in 1833, however, a great change took place. Now the English legislature proceeded more quickly than the Danish laws. Consequently England began to make frequent representations to Denmark about various questions concerning slavery in order to make her issue similar laws, and sometimes these representations simply assumed the character of pressure. To a certain extent Denmark here shared the fate of other powers.

The representations were of two descriptions, of which the first is the less interesting. It carefully communicated to Denmark every measure England had herself taken, and proposed the acceptance of certain laws. England inquired thoroughly about the position of Danish slaves, and the English minister at Copenhagen carefully reported everything said or done in Denmark with respect to slavery.

First of all England naturally refused to consider an earlier Danish proposal on mutual exchange of fugitive

slaves. Next she was anxious to have all her treaties with other powers against slave trade made publicly known. Then Denmark was called upon to prohibit slave-holding for her consuls in foreign harbours. The Danish government first refused to do so ; but finally it yielded, when England drew attention to the fact that several other countries had followed her advice<sup>22</sup>. At last, when in 1847 Denmark had just decided to emancipate the slaves of her West Indian islands, there came from Palmerston a vigorous note — it was also sent to other powers concerned — inviting countries, who had possessions in Africa, to prohibit all their subjects from buying or possessing slaves. The argument is typical of Palmerston : “ The practice of slaveholding cannot be necessary for any purpose agricultural or domestic in the Coast, because there being no want of population on the Continent of Africa, free labour may always be procured there ”. Of this England and the United States gave the actual proof. Purchase and employment of slaves by European settlers can only encourage slave dealers and native princes in continuing the traffic, “ since it must be difficult for the uninstructed chiefs to comprehend how it happens, that the same nations, which make slave trade an offence, when carried on by sea, should permit and encourage it and even partake in it, when it is carried on by land ”.

Denmark did not get time to follow this invitation ; but here again a problem appeared, which had to be solved, if Denmark would keep the African forts.

The second group of representations, made by England to Denmark, was of a more unpleasant character. They complained that the Danish laws against slave trade had been broken, now here, now there, and frequently they were followed by admonitions to take such precautions that the crimes should not be repeated. These aggressive

charges must often have impressed the Danish government painfully, because they knew themselves in possession of the best intentions, and they generally did what they could. The charges appeared worse, because the complaints of the English government in several cases were very questionable. It is a great question how far the conduct of the English in this matter towards the Danes can be considered as really justified, or as arrogance on the part of the greater power towards the smaller. However, there seems to be an obvious difference in this respect between what happened on land, and what happened on sea.

It is sure that the Danish government in Africa was unable to keep its territory free of slave trading. It is true that good authorities say that the slave trade had come to an end on the Danish coast. When accusations were made against Danish authorities, as mentioned in connection with Governor Morck, there is little reason to consider them seriously. Winniett said before a select parliamentary committee that he believed the Danish forts furnished canoes for the shipping of slaves, and that he did not trust either the Danish or the Dutch support against the slave trade<sup>23</sup>; but the map in the report of this committee shows the Danish coast as freed from the trade. In the same way Fitzpatrick had suspicions that there was a species of agency for slave trading at Danish Accra; but no proof whatever has been found to support these assertions, and moreover they are not likely to be true.

Nevertheless, during the eighteen-forties so bad a slave trade went on along the Danish coast, that K. Larsen says, that the country between Kitta and the River Volta became a disgrace to the Danes; for the slaves were brought from the interior of the country along the river and gathered

near its mouth, sometimes at Adda immediately west of the river, sometimes a little to the east at Wye, but more frequently at Atocco. Generally they were then marched further east to Popoe or Whydah on the Bight of Benin, places some distance east of the last Danish fort at Kitta. In the Bight of Benin the slave trade was still flourishing. Only when a European man-of-war happened to be too menacing there, did the slave-traders dare to ship their slaves directly from Atocco : an English captain writes that it did not happen more than once or twice a year. With respect to the Danes, it is said that they interfered occasionally and at any rate they discouraged it. Another source tells that the trade was really carried on with great cautiousness. The slave-dealers had spies to warn them, and the slaves were often taken in canoes across the lagoon between Volta and Kitta. On certain occasions they got hold of the slaves by employing black carriers to bring things down to Whydah ; but when they arrived there, they were retained and sent on board the ships. These people passed under the very noses of the English as well as the Danes, and if they asked Europeans for help, the slave-dealers accused them of theft, etc.

It was this traffic that provoked a representation from Palmerston to the Danish government in 1841. Referring to the fact that the Danish governor was informed about this traffic, but had not the means of suppressing it, the British government called upon the Danes to furnish their authorities with the means of acting more vigorously, or should this be inconvenient they earnestly request that the British cruizers may be permitted after proper application to the government to destroy these slave factories and expel foreign-state-agents.

That Danish interference was really attempted is apparent from the books of both Claridge and Kay Larsen ; but

the Danes were too few to carry through the complete extinction of the trade.

More doubtful is what happened on sea. The sources telling of events along the coast of Africa are too scanty to support any dogmatic conclusion. Therefore it may be suitable to consider what went on in the West Indies. First there is a close relation between occurrences in the West Indies and in Africa, and secondly the sources with respect to Denmark are here somewhat more abundant, the Danish trade to the West Indies being still alive in the forties. However, even including these documents, it would be necessary in order to throw full light on the question also to study the sources concerning other countries.

It cannot be denied that according to the records on Denmark the English zeal is so remarkable that it reminds one of pure selfishness. As a consequence of France, and especially England, having many more men-of-war, hunting slave-vessels than Denmark, the treaty of 1834 resulted in the Danish government, during the subsequent years, especially from 1840, issuing numerous warrants for French and English ships, allowing them to search vessels carrying the Danish flag<sup>24</sup>. This system made it possible for the powers to have an insight into one another's commerce, and thus England could control the Danish trade to African and South and Central American ports (and also the trade of other powers that acceded to the treaties). It is a question how far England really did so, and it is even a greater problem to decide how far England in the name of humanity made use of the slave trade question to check the commerce of other nations. It can be quite understood if the English in certain cases made use of the power with which the supremacy of the sea so highly furnished them to incommode their competitors.



Several times England reported to Denmark that some abuse had taken place ; but when an examination was held, the result generally showed that the complaint had been without foundation. Above all the English were anxious to prevent vessels, suspected of having some connection with the slave trade, from calling at Danish harbours ; for instance as early as in 1832 the English believed that merchants of St. Thomas cooperated with slave traders of Nantes. Denmark was requested to prohibit all slave vessels from visiting or being fitted out at St. Thomas. The Danes answered that offences against their laws would certainly be punished, but St. Thomas was a free harbour, and therefore the control over vessels visiting the harbour was very limited. In 1834 there was a complaint that slaves from the English island of Anguilla were sold at St. Thomas to Porto Rico, and that the Danish governor connived at it. On this occasion the English minister at Copenhagen replied : “ I have reason to fear that the information is not collected from the most authentic sources... names are very uncorrectly given ”. The minister had seen a proprietor from the West Indies and been informed that the authorities did not connive at the slave trade, but that what happened was due to the inseparable evils of a free port, though it was admitted that “ it was possible that the authorities may not have been so active as they might have been ”. In a later dispatch the minister adds as “ confidential ” that his impression was that the Danes in the West Indies were more interested in the harbour than in the suppression of the slave trade, and they feared that if ship-masters found any difficulty there, they would in preference resort to St. Bartholomew and St. Eustacia ; the Danish governor had his largest incomes from the customs duties.

The effect of this sort of confidential information was

to make the English government more aggressive. In December 1835 a similar complaint was made, and now they obtained the issue of a Danish rescript, that English negroes should readily be delivered up <sup>25</sup>. In 1838 an investigation was asked for, when it was reported that a Spanish shconer " Con-la-boca " had landed a cargo of slaves at St. Thomas. According to the Danish examination of the matter, only four passengers had been landed, and the vessel had papers showing that it came from Sierra Leone, " from where it cannot be supposed that Her Majesty's governor could allow the export of slaves ".

The following year it was Denmark's turn to complain. H. M. S. " Grecian " had undertaken a somewhat hard-handed inspection of an innocent Danish schooner " Charlotte ", because it sailed near a slave vessel, and the " Grecian " had fired at it. As a result of the negotiations the English agreed to pay the damage.

In 1842 a Danish ship was said to have lauded a cargo of slaves at Ilha Grande on the coast of Brazil. The Danish government expressed their regret at the angry tone assumed by the English, especially as it appeared that their information had been wrong. In 1846 England even felt induced to communicate that a Dane in Venezuela had possibly accelerated the death of a slave — the Danish minister " read the details with the feeling of horror they naturally inspired ".

All these cases are of a rather doubtful character. When the home government asked for examinations, especially of the transactions of authorities, it might very well happen that some details remained veiled. It is true about all colonial affairs that it was almost impossible in Europe to get information about what happened so far away. But generally speaking, how it is or not as regards the Danes and the slave trade, it looks as if England was particularly

agressive. All these representations must have irritated Denmark greatly. Each of them caused an infinite amount of writing and annoyance, and they contributed to make the Danes tired of colonies. No doubt Denmark wished to be on friendly terms with England, and therefore the Danish government preferred to remove the reason for all the trouble and to sell their possessions.

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## WHY ENGLAND WAS PREPARED TO PURCHASE

In several cases the considerations which Denmark had reason to undertake were based on circumstances which could also bring about deliberations for those who eventually wished to buy the Danish settlements. Owing to the proximity of the English territories, both in India and Africa, it was only natural that England bought ; but it must be recollected that during most of the 19. century the English government approved of the expansion of the Empire only with great reluctance.

This is more true of Africa than of any other part. England as well as Denmark parted with a good source of income at the cessation of the slave trade, and suffered great losses from the deadly climate and the troubles with the natives.

Therefore two opinions opposed one another. The English government, i. e. the Colonial Office, being obliged to pay an essential part of the expenses for the maintenance of the settlements, not only objected to the acquisition of new colonies, but also favoured the abandonment of existing possessions. Consequently most of the English forts on the Gold Coast were given up during the eighteen twenties, and finally it was even decided to abandon all of them,

The contrary view was held by the English merchants, who enjoyed the profit of the possessions and generally were strongly supported by the governors and the residents of the colonies. In addition they could point out

that if the Gold Coast forts were abandoned, England would not have a single station left from Sierre Leone to the Cape of Good Hope, while the Americans or the Dutch would occupy the forts at once. It was this influence that succeeded in retaining the most important of the Guinea forts, whose subsequent prosperity was due so largely to Maclean's Skill.

During the forties opinions turned more and more against the government. Dr. Madden recommended the reoccupation of some of the old forts, and towards the end of the decade steps were undertaken to occupy Whydah on the coast of Dahomey on the Bight of Benin, east of the Danish possessions. However, every time the acquisition of new forts was discussed the Colonial Office still expressed its antipathy, which appears from notes on the letters by which the Office was requested to buy the Danish settlements. In 1840 one of the officials writes : " I am very much against adding to our African settlements ", and in 1848 G(rey) observes : " There w(ould) no doubt be considerable advantage in acquiring the Danish forts, but this could not be effected without an expenditure which it would be inexpedient at present to incur ". And as a supplement to this : " It is not so much the original cost as the annual expense for the maintenance that is to be considered ".

However, occasional utterances that England should aim at the acquisition of the Danish forts in Africa can be traced rather early. Thus during the war about 1810 it was suggested that both Danish and Dutch forts ought to be conquered <sup>26</sup>, and in 1826 there is a letter from a resident J. Bannermann, saying : " It would be most desirable that the foreign flags, which at present intersect our stations between Dixcove and Prampram, should be removed and the whole line be under British dominion, for now there

are among Europeans very opposing interests so that what is attempted by the English is often thwarted by the secret intrigues of the Dutch ". But it was not until about 1840, when it became known that Denmark would sell — and especially when this was connected with the idea of a French purchase — that more prominent persons began to direct their attention to the matter. Their reflections indicate what the English expected from the acquisition. The most important of them are Dr. Madden's report, a letter from Winniett in 1847, and two other letters in 1849 from Fitzpatrick and Mr. Forster, the leader of the merchants trading to Africa. Finally there is a statement from the Colonial Office to the Treasury. These sources fully express both the interests of the government and of the merchants, as well as the state of public opinion in England.

With respect to the purchase of the Indian settlements the authorities in London seem to have left it largely to the government in India. Probably Lord Ellenborough, for a time the governor-general, did not care much for it ; but in other respects opinions do not appear to be devided, and the arguments in favour of this purchase are not so extensive.

#### 1. *Governmental Views.*

The government had to look at it from a territorial point of view and from a financial point of view.

Concerning Tranquebar and Serampore attention was almost exclusively paid to the territorial point of view. Already, from the beginning, the Indian government pronounces as its principle, that " it is advisable to purchase such detached portions of foreign territory as those in

question, where it can be done at a reasonable price. For though from the information which we have been able to collect, we are not led to believe that such purchase, even on the most moderate terms, would be advantageous as pecuniary investments, yet upon many points of fiscal or other administration, the intervention of such patches of independent jurisdiction must obviously be productive of serious inconvenience". Later on it is affirmed that the incomes should not pay interest on the purchase money ; but the same view is maintained : " We can only add that we consider the transfer of these possessions to be highly desirable, and that some sacrifice may fairly be made to acquire them ". Finally the president in council (at that moment not the governor-general) approved of it : " His honour cannot regard the value of the Danish settlements if transferred to the British government apart from the policy of attaching to our own territory the possessions of a foreign and a European government ; an opportunity of effecting this is now afforded, and the King of Denmark may not, His Honour observes, at some future period be so willing to transfer the settlements on reasonable terms " 27.

As regards the Gold Coast it had similarly to be admitted, that it was an advantage to see British influence extended over a larger area as well as increased in the districts where it already existed ; but here expence was the main obstacle.

First the purchase money. For some time there was a rumour circulating that Denmark asked £ 40.000 for the rights, and the secretary of state for colonial affairs observed on Winniett's letter of 31. December 1847 : " The supposed cost of these puts it quite out of question even thinking of the purchase... Her Majesty's Government is not prepared to entertain any such proposal ".

But when afterwards the price underwent the startling fall to £ 10.000, it was, indeed, too great a temptation. A note on Forster's letter of 30. April 1849 shows this, and Forster himself says : " Compared with their importance to this country the sum is a *bagatelle*. At the same time I am fully aware of the narrow views which obtain both at the Treasury and with a portion of the public on such matters ". In the statement from the Colonial Office to the Treasury the low price was emphasized.

However, it was not only the purchase money which was thus considered. Similar attention was paid to the matter of annual expense, but these meditations led to the conclusion that the settlements would probably be able to yield a surplus, for it was considered possible to gain a great income from customs duties, which were to be established, when the Danish possessions were bought. Neither the Danes nor the Dutch collected such duties at their forts, and it was not possible for the English to collect them without the collaboration of the rest of the Europeans. When, in 1822, it was proposed to introduce customs duties at the English forts, the merchants wrote an alarmed letter to the Colonial Office, warning that most of the trade would only be taken over by the other nations.

In 1826 Bannermann thought that the expense attending the purchase of the foreign forts would be counterbalanced by the duties that could then be collected. In 1842 Madden proposed some duties, and the merchants joined with a proposal for foreign vessels. The most industrious man with respect to this question was Governor Winniett, who as a whole cared most attentively for his colony<sup>28</sup>. At first, in 1847, a duty on rum and gin was attempted ; but due to the lack of collaboration with the Dutch and the Danes it failed in its purpose. Then, when the prospect of



purchasing the Danish colonies appeared, Winniett drew up a plan for collecting duties on spirits, tobacco, gun powder and fire arms. The Colonial Office was greatly pleased with it and emphasized it accordingly in the statement to the Treasury. Indeed, it was considered expedient in this document to leave out all mention of the Dutch. All the advantages to be obtained for the money were described, and probably this hopeful prospect greatly stimulated the desire to purchase ; the Treasury found out, that the purchase was no less than beneficial. Afterwards disappointment prevailed ; negotiations were undertaken with the Dutch, but without agreement, so that the duties could not be established. Similarly devoid of success was a poll tax, intended to take the place of these duties.

No doubt Governor Winniett had planned to establish English rule most thoroughly. In addition he hoped that his plan would enable the creation of a local military force, so that the cruel habits of the natives could be checked. The Colonial Office approved this with the following golden words : “ Experience has proved that military discipline is a powerful engine for introducing among barbarous tribes the habits of civilization ”.

To the advantages, thus expected by the English government, can be added the prospect that some human lives would probably be saved, if the seat of the English government was moved to the relatively healthy Fort Christiansborg, a change that really took place some years after the transfer. Generally speaking, the expectations were disappointed as a consequence of the resistance very soon developed by the natives. Of course the negroes did not straightway agree to taxation or approve of the increase of their dependance upon the Europeans, such as would invariably happen, when they had obtained one master instead of two.

2. *Commercial Views.*

The main reason why the Europeans maintained settlements on the Gold Coast (as well as in most other places) has always been the commerce. The influence from the City of London has in so many cases been decisive for English foreign policy, that it occasions no surprise to find that it was an important factor in the purchase of the Danish settlements. It has been mentioned that the merchants prevented the abandonment of the English Guinea forts in the eighteen twenties, and so many people were agreed upon the great value of the Coast that it is astonishing abandonment should ever have been mooted. Indeed, the merchants, trading to Guinea, never neglected to inform the Colonial Office concerning the treasures of the Coast, and they must have earned ample profits, for they were willing to make sacrifices whenever it was wanted.

Repeatedly Mr. Forster maintained in the eighteen twenties that the Gold Coast from a commercial point of view was the most valuable of the British possessions on the Western Coast of Africa, and in the middle of the century Earl Grey says: " By far the most important of the British possessions held chiefly for commercial objects are those on the coast of Africa ".

The abandonment of the forts was accompanied by great lamenting on the part of merchants, and when the government was going to give up the last places, they planned how to retain the possessions on their own responsibility, and for several years (1828-43) they took over the administration with Maclean as governor. As related above their interests caused exchange of diplomatic notes with Denmark, and most of these documents show distinctly that

their main desire was that no war or unrest or interference should hamper the English trade, especially the export of palm oil. Owing to the influence of Maclean, English public opinion became convinced that the Danes were attempting by all means to prevent the transport of palm oil to English stations, and Madden says in 1842 concerning this trade : “ The Danes have monopolized it to a great extent, and one of their principal merchants at Christiansborg informed me, that five or six vessels were loaded chiefly with it last year, at the Danish settlement ”. In 1842 Bannermann writes that within the territory claimed by the Danes, “ is grown all the palm oil, ground nuts and Indian corn purchased at this place (British Accra) ; moreover every article of live stock, such as our sheep, turkies, ducks and fowls, is reared within these territories, from whence we, here, as well as residents of Elmina, Cape Coast & Annamaboe derive our supplies ”. Therefore Winniett seems not to exaggerate, when he says in his letter of 31. December 1847 : “ There is no doubt that in a commercial point of view the Danes possess the finest part of the Coast ; and were they commercially an enterprising people, their possessions here would be of great importance to them ”.

No wonder that the English merchants were alarmed by the report that France was going to buy the forts. They soon referred this to the government and later on all the news they could collect on that question were similarly reported. As long as the Danes resided at Christiansborg, the English had a great share in the profit of the commerce, and they could not suffer the loss of these incomes.

### 3. *Civilization.*

Further there is a series of considerations, which were, indeed, constantly mentioned by government and merchants ; but their particular effect might rather be to make public opinion and Parliament interested in the extension of British influence in Africa.

These considerations concerned the efforts of civilizing the negroes adjoining the European settlements.

It was not that the Danish government had neglected this task. The part of the Coast influenced by the Danes was perhaps more progressive than the English part. There were schools, roads and plantations ; as far as possible interference took place against human sacrifices, and, as in India, the Danish settlement was the first station of a Protestant mission. There is no reason to believe that the Coast, if it had remained Danish, would not have kept pace with the English territories in such respects.

Nevertheless much still required to be done. Probably the resolution to sell made the Danes take only the most necessary measures for the maintenance of the possessions. It is related above how the Danish authorities could not afford the extinction of the slave trade along the part of the Coast, claimed by them ; also that slavery was not abandoned here, although it was so in the Danish West Indian islands. Domestic slavery and slaves taken in “ pawn ” (for debt) existed as well in the English as in the Danish territories, and human sacrifices still took place, at least secretly, because they were a holy duty among the natives <sup>29</sup>.

But the English thought themselves able to promote civilization and humanity on the Gold Coast considerably.

In a letter written soon after the Danish settlements had been taken over by the English, Winniett complains that the natives, formerly under Danish influence, were a savage and unruly people, who caused him much trouble. He heard of dreadful human sacrifices, and he writes : “ There has for a long time, been an impression on the minds of many persons on this part of the Coast that the Danish local executive power has been but little above that which is nominal... What a powerful reason do these facts furnish, My Lord, why the influence of the British Crown should be widely extended in these regions ”.

Among the advantages, aimed at by the English, the extinction of the slave trade was naturally the most prominent. Already Bannermann in 1826 writes that the purchase would totally put an end to the traffic in slaves on that part of the Coast, which would ever exist as long as foreign vessels of any nation could visit the Dutch and Danish ports under pretence of wanting wood, water etc. ”. The merchants also pointed out this view at once, and Winniett wrote in 1847 that effective garrisons at Kitta and Whydah could stop the traffic, and thus it was much better that the whole Coast was brought under “ the salutary influence of *one* powerful, enterprising, and human government ”.

Other improvements were expected. Fitzpatrick in 1847, beside speaking of the slave trade and pointing out that customs duties would supply money for schools, says : “ The confidence which would be supposed by the administration of justice by an English magistrate would invite traders from the interior to the Coast, which they are deterred from visiting ” ; and the statement from the Colonial Office to the Treasury assures that as far as the British jurisdiction reached, great progress towards civilization had taken place during the preceding years. The

dwelling of the natives were improved, and their taste for furniture and textiles of European manufacture had increased. If England bought the forts, there could be made schools, roads etc. from the customs duties, and Christianity would be spread by Protestant missionaries.

These English views were not meant particularly as a criticism of the Danish administration ; the statement says : “ While these forts are in the hands of the Danes, there is no danger of their being made use of in any way to countenance a revival of the slave trade in a region where it is now happily extinguished, and thus as the influence of the two countries is directed towards the same objects, there is comparatively little probability of any serious difference arising. The case would be very different, if the forts were in other hands... ”.

Once more the argument returns to the decisive point why England, after all, bought the Danish settlements, the fear of purchase by other powers. In this respect governmental and commercial views were wholeheartedly in accord with public opinion in viewing the purchase as an act of urgent national necessity.

#### *4. The Fear of Purchase by Other Powers.*

This fear concerned Indian as well as African possessions.

With respect to Tranquebar and Serampore it bore upon Russia. Just in that period the Russian interests in India began to become one of the dominant factors in world policy. Not much was said about it in this case ; but when the resolution of selling was communicated to the English minister at Copenhagen, the Danish intimated that Russia probably wished to buy. At that time Russia and Denmark were on good terms with one another — especially in the

English imagination. That the question really was looked at from that side in London appears from a despatch to the governor-general in India, which runs — although without direct reference to Russia : “ The acquisition of the Danish settlements in India is an object of some importance, not only on account of the serious inconvenience which must always, under the most favorable circumstances, result from the intermixture of small patches of foreign territory with the British dominions, but still more from the possibilities of the settlements in question being transferred to another government under which the inevitable inconvenience of such intermixture of territory might, in a political point of view, be very greatly enhanced ” <sup>30</sup>.

How much importance the English attached to this cannot be proved ; but considering the high price which was paid for the Indian stations it seems as if this was the main point. As far as is known the Danes offered the possessions neither to Russia nor to any other power. It has been touched on that in August 1843 the English minister at Copenhagen was told that neither the Indian nor the African possessions had been offered to any foreign government, and that England should have the preemption.

Concerning the Guinea forts perhaps Denmark did not expect a possibility of rivalry. At first the English minister at Copenhagen reported that probably the English could fix their own price, “ as it is not likely they will find any competition in the market ”. Not until 1843 the Danish foreign minister indicated the possibility of a French purchase. In England people were much more convinced of a competition. Probably this fear was exaggerated ; but at any rate there were many reasons to believe that France was inclined to purchase the forts. As late as 1849

Mr. Forster also observes that Belgium was anxious to get possessions in Africa.

The dangerous rival, however, was France, still considered the national enemy to England. Although competent historians have often called attention to the fact that France during the Orleans monarchy was particularly anxious to acquire new colonies <sup>31</sup>, little attention is nowadays paid to the question, compared with that given to colonial policy after 1880, and this Anglo-French rivalry deserves further study.

The French enterprise did not only concern Algiers. Stations were reoccupied in Madagascar ; the influence at Senegal was extended, and new possessions were acquired in the Pacific and on the Guinea Coast <sup>32</sup>.

Previously French commerce had established communication with the Coast, merchants of Marseille wanting palm oil for their soap manufacture. Also merchants of Bordeaux had now become interested and arranged explorations of the Coast, and the leader of these expeditions, an officer of the navy, Bouet-Willaumez, availed himself of the opportunity to conclude treaties with some native chiefs. Two treaties were the result of his first expedition in 1837-39, and they were renewed and another four concluded during a new expedition in 1842.

It seems as if the French government had some doubt whether these treaties ought to be ratified or not. The foreign policy of Guizot above all made a point of *l'entente cordiale* with England, and colonial undertakings were often considered less important than the European system of alliances ; but at last, and in spite of England, France approved some of the treaties. As a consequence of this, Bouet-Willaumez founded modest French stations at Great-Bassam and Assinie on the Ivory Coast and at Gaboon near the equator.



The English, and especially the English merchants, governors and colonial residents, watched all of this with great jealousy. Already in 1814 the merchants trading to Africa were very dissatisfied that the treaty of peace restored to France all the possessions, held by her in 1792. They said that France had always evinced the greatest anxiety to erect forts and obtain a share of the Gold Coast trade, and measures were proposed to prevent the French from establishing themselves on that Coast. Numerous English letters in the subsequent period deal with the French in Senegal (Goree Island) and Gambia. Therefore as soon as the Danish forts came into question, the merchants wrote : “ We are aware, that the French have a strong inclination for an establishment on the Gold Coast and are fully persuaded that scarcely a greater evil could befall our settlements than to have them located at Christiansborg ”. Later on they transmitted to the Colonial Office a letter from Bannermann, recommending him because of his “ long experience, his respectability and the soberness of his judgment ”. Bannermann writes : “ Should the French obtain possession of these settlements, it cannot be doubted from the extreme jealousy of these people that within a year of their coming here, serious disputes will take place between them and ourselves, for they will without question endeavour to monopolize the trade of Akim and Akwapim, Krobbbo etc. by prohibiting these people from trading at the English settlements, witness their doings at Senegal and Portendik ”. Soon afterwards Bannermann mentions the prospect that the French would introduce catholic missionaries. As will be seen from Stephen's above quoted note these considerations impressed the Colonial Office, and the diplomatic representation to Denmark in 1843 was certainly directed against France.

The English were really nervous about it. The fear

developed so monstrously on the Coast itself, that Maclean soon wrote home that a rumour was current that France really had bought the Danish possessions, and he adds : “ I sincerely hope, this is not true — if it be, our government is really much to blame ”. The fear also proved very hard to kill. Even after that the Anglo-Danish treaty of sale had been signed, when the papers dealing with it were to be printed for the use of Parliament, a careful investigation was arranged in order to secure that this printed matter should not contain anything about a French fort which was suspected to have existed at Kitta in an earlier period.

It is problematical how far France really did care for the Danish possessions, or how far any negotiations for sale went on between Denmark and France.

English sources are in the affirmative. In 1847 Winniett writes, that when the prince of Joinville in 1843 passed the Coast, his attention was very much occupied with the Danish settlements, and that a French commercial house had lately fixed a trading establishment at British Accra. Winniett gives as his opinion that France had “ many means of, and a well known disposition of annoying us in our colonial possessions... It would be more expensive to have France there, than to purchase the whole of it ”. — Fitzpatrick in his letter of 1849 says that the diplomatic correspondance of 1843 took place in the consequence of a report that the Danish government were about to dispose of their forts and settlements to the French nation, and Forster writes in his letter, also from 1849 : “ About three years ago I found they (the Danes) were in negotiations with France, when I suggested a difficulty to Lord Aberdeen which I believe stopped the treaty at that time ”.

However, no better authorities on these negotiations have

been found either in English or in Danish archives. They may have been very secret or only viva-voce ; but there is as much reason to think that Mr. Forster's information is of doubtful authority or refers to what happened in 1843. Whatever has been the attitude of France, the fear of the English with respect to the Gold Coast seems to be justified only in part.

The danger that really existed of a French purchase was diminished considerably, first by the personal friendship between the foreign ministers of France and England, Guizot and Aberdeen, and later on by the unrest following the French revolution in February 1848 ; but it still existed, and there is no doubt that the fear of it largely — perhaps decisively — influenced English action in arranging the purchase.

## NEGOTIATIONS FOR PURCHASE

### 1. *Tranquebar and Serampore.*

The negotiations for the purchase offer no great complications and can be described rather shortly. They were conducted separately for the Indian and African possessions, and although the Indian negotiations were the objects of some delay, the purchase of Tranquebar and Serampore was first accomplished.

The Danish government took it for granted that nobody would pay more for the Indian settlements than the English East India Company, because it possessed the surrounding country and without further expense could extend its administration also over these territories, and because it would save the annual payment to the Danes for the salt monopoly. The English governor-general seems to have shown his interest by asking repeatedly, how far Denmark was willing to sell.

In his despatch from Copenhagen on the resolution of sale, Wynn says that his informant "was not able to mention anything like a price... The arrangement which would be more agreeable to this government, were it possible, would be an exchange by which they would acquire Tortola, the proximity of which to the Danish islands gives the slaves an opportunity to escape". But Russell put his note on the paper: "I certainly would not exchange Tortola for this".

Consequently the difficulty was to fix a price. The

English governor-general was soon called upon to consider the purchase, and his government examined the accounts both for Tranquebar and Serampore for the time they had been occupied by the English in 1801-02 and 1808-15 ; but for the reason that the English had on both occasions handsomely paid the salaries as well of the Danish civil officials as of their own people, these accounts only show a large deficit <sup>33</sup>, and they gave no reliable information.

Simultaneously the negotiations were opened in another way. Full power was issued by the Danish government to the Danish governor in India, P. Hansen, to undertake the negotiations and conclude a treaty of sale at a price of one Mill. Rigsbankdaler (ca. 1.111.111 Company's Rupees : ca. £ 110,000) on condition that the treaty should be approved of the King.

P. Hansen appeared to be an able negotiator. He took care to point out a good many advantages to treat for. In a letter to the English governor-general, Lord Auckland, he described the possessions for sale in detail. He emphasised that the roadstead at Tranquebar was one of the safest on the Coast of Coromandel, so that the principal part of the trade of Tanjore would pass through Tranquebar, if the place was British territory. For the same reason and because of its number of good public and private buildings the town was well adapted for the seat of the authorities of the whole district. He mentioned no price, but proposed it to be fixed on the basis of the annual revenue from the territories, and he suggested an additional sum to be paid for the fortress of Tranquebar (Dansborg) and the public buildings of the town as well as for the ceding of all rights as such. The pensioning of the present functionaries could be settled in connection with this sum — the English should, as far as they had occasion, employ the same native

officials. Finally the conditions for the future trade of Danish subjects to India should be expressly determined by treaty, and Hansen was anxious to accelerate the negotiations as much as possible.

Later on followed an account of the annual revenues. Deducting the payment to native authorities these incomes could be estimated at ca. 55.000 Co. R. a year (Tranquebar 25.000, Serampore 17.000, salt monopoly 16.000). There was very little difference between the English and Danish systems of collecting revenues, and Hansen intimated that a higher revenue could be levied. The income according to account capitalized at 5 % answered to a sum of 1.100.000 Co. R. or 11 lak of Rupees. The government of India wrote to the home authorities that considering there would be some costs of administration, 10 lak might be enough.

The Board of Directors for the East India Company now issued full power for the governor-general to undertake the negotiations <sup>34</sup>.

If other compensations had been added to the 11 lak asked for, Hansen seemed to be on the safe side, but in order to secure himself he prudently despatched to Denmark an estimation, according to which all of it had a value of 8 1/5 lak, and he wrote that if he were the purchaser, he would only offer 5 1/2 lak.

The negotiations were then for some time carried on from the English side by the president of the council of Ft. William, Calcutta (the governor-general being absent). Further valuation of Tranquebar was required from the English collector of Tanjore, Mr. Kindersley, who considered Hansen's estimation very modest. He emphasized the recent progress of the agriculture in the district surrounding the town, while in opposition to Hansen he expected the buildings etc... to be valueless for the English <sup>35</sup>. At a meeting

Hansen and Kindersley agreed that the English would receive an annual income of ca. 50,000 Co. R. The discussion of buildings and pensioning was left out, and the English offered 20 years' purchase money (10 lak), while Hansen demanded 25 years' purchase money (12 1/2 lak) in order to obtain the sum required by his King. Hansen appears to have been rather open to Kindersley, for Kindersley communicated to the English authorities that 1 1/2 lak more would probably be satisfactory, and he did not expect the Danish government to give way.

The president of the council at Ft. William no doubt favoured the purchase. Previously he had assured Hansen that the sum of the revenues would not be considered decisive, and now he was disposed to think that the English should give way and pay 12 1/2 lak. But then a curious delay of the whole negotiation occurred.

It is difficult to account for it ; but it seems to have been due to the governor-general. A new governor-general, Lord Ellenborough, had been appointed in February 1842. When Hansen reported to Denmark his private low valuation, the Danish government preferred to wait till the new governor-general came to India, and decided to insist on 1 Mill. Rigsbankdaler, as first demanded. However, Lord Ellenborough did not promote the purchase in any way. He appears to have understood nothing of it at all. He took it in the same nonchalant way, which was the general feature of his character. He would only offer 20 years' purchase money and added moreover that probably the buildings were in a bad state, so that " from that sum should be deducted the cost of the buildings and of repairing them, and keeping them in repair " <sup>36</sup>. What an illogical expression and what a difficult calculation !

No wonder that this man did not share the views of the president in council. He would by no means pay more

than 10 lak, and the case was referred to the authorities in London<sup>37</sup>. Nothing more happened for a long time. Probably the recall of Lord Ellenborough diverted attention from the question.

After 15 month in August 1844, Hansen suggested to the new governor-general, Henry Hardinge, that another application to London should take place, referring to the facts, that under the existing circumstances the Danish government could not enter into negotiations for sale to other powers, and that private people in the settlements suffered from the uncertain prospects. The negotiations were soon revived. The Indian government thought itself authorized to act on the basis of the original full power, and Hansen forwarded a draft of a treaty, which was after some less important alterations signed on 22. February 1845 at Calcutta and sent home for ratifications.

According to this treaty the King of Denmark ceded his possessions on the continent of India to the English East India Company for 1.250.000 Co. R. (12 1/2 lak : £ 125,000 : 1.125.000 Rigsbankdaler : 2 1/4 Mill. Kroner) to be paid on ratification. The English engaged to pay the annual amounts to the native authorities (ca. 4.000 Co. R. to the Rajah of Tanjore and ca. 1.800 Co. R. to the Zemindar of Sewraphully), and the Danes to pay all other pensions. The fortress and other public buildings were transferred without further compensation. Protection and former rights were secured to the inhabitants. Judicial cases, which had been decided according to Danish law, were not to be re-opened for decision according to English law. It was expressly mentioned that the treaty affected no alteration in the right of Danish subjects to trade to Indian ports. The Danish mission and Serampore College should continue their work undisturbed. A period of 6 months was given for the exchange of the ratifications at Calcutta<sup>38</sup>.



The most important alteration made in Hansen's draft of the treaty — in accordance with a proposal from the accountant-general — was the omission of a clause which provided that the Nicobar Islands should not be included in the sale. The paragraph on the legal status of the inhabitants was also discussed ; it was said to be unnecessary ; but on the whole Hansen had his way concerning that, whilst he yielded with respect to the Danish trade, having proposed that in future it should be neither less favoured nor more restricted than the trade of any other foreign nation, nor more restricted than it would have been in case Denmark had retained the settlements.

The King of Denmark ratified the treaty on 30. May 1845 ; the English East India Company ratified it in 2. July 1845, saying : “ We have derived much satisfaction from the conclusion of this treaty. ” In England it was discussed how far the Crown or the Company should ratify ; but the Foreign Office was of opinion that as the Crown had not given the full power for the negotiations, it could not ratify the treaty. Thus formally the purchase did not concern the British government at all.

The ratifications were exchanged at Calcutta on the 3. October 1845 and the purchase money paid by bills on London. The English being anxious to take over Serampore the town was transferred by L. S. Lindhard to the English commissioners I. I. Harvey and H. V. Bayley on the 10. October 1845. Tranquebar was handed over by Hansen to the commissioners H. C. Montgomery and F. M. Levin on the 7. November 1845. The sloop “ *Galethea* ” under Captain Steen Bille was sent out from Denmark to undertake the transfer. It did not reach Tranquebar until the 10. October, and thus it came too late to hand over Serampore, although the Danish officials of that town at first hoped to wait till it arrived. Nor did

the vessel stay at Tranquebar till this place had been transferred, because it was charged with the task of undertaking a careful exploration in order to find out, how far a colony could be established with profit in the Nicobar Islands, and it hurried away for this purpose. After some experiments and deliberations all colonization of the islands was given up, and they were finally left by the Danes on the 10. June 1848. Official supremacy was not relinquished until 1868, when England made complaints about some pirates there.

Thus by leaving her Asiatic possessions Denmark made an annual saving of ca. 50.000 Rigsbankdaler. The interests of the purchase money were estimated at 45.000 Rigsbankdaler a year and the annual profit consequently was nearly 100.000 Rigsbankdaler or more than £ 10.000. Recollecting the whole position of the continental settlements and their future prospects, and considering that Hansen succeeded in obtaining a larger amount of money than he was instructed to, the sale must be looked at as fairly profitable for Denmark, while there can be no doubt of the purchase being expedient for England.

With respect to the colonies themselves the consequences were for Serampore a prosperous advance, and for Tranquebar some decline, because the town lost all advantages of being the seat of government. Montgomery, finding the buildings of Tranquebar in an "excellent condition", proposed that the seat of the collector be removed from Negapatam to Tranquebar ; but the merchants of Negapatam made representations in order to keep the collector in their town <sup>39</sup>, and the removal did not take place.

2. *The Coast of Africa.*

The purchase of the African possessions was not so soon effected. The only thing that happened as a consequence of the Danish resolution to sell was that Dr. Madden was instructed to report on the state and value of the forts. Bannermann learned from Governor Carstensen that the Danes asked £ 40.000 for the settlements, “ which sum ”, he says “ would be well laid out by Great Britain in such a purchase ”<sup>40</sup>. However, Lord Stanley would not make any offer for the forts, and no negotiations were undertaken.

Winniott's letter of 1847 estimated the Danish buildings at £ 30.000 or more, and he did not consider £ 40.000 too high a price. Governor Carstensen appears to have nourished his appetite for the purchase, but the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, was still indisposed to pay so much.

If Denmark had any possibility of selling to France, it was considerably diminished by the French revolution in 1848. Soon afterwards the Danish absolutism was replaced by a constitutional government. Probably the new ministers had even more difficulty than the late ones in finding any reason for retaining the Guinea forts. The Sleswick-Holstein insurrection caused urgent need of money, so that the year 1848 greatly increased the desire to get rid of the annual expenses on that account.

Neither England nor France could at that time be expected to buy, and other ways of escape were looked for. Governor Carstensen wrote to one of the merchants in London that Denmark would perhaps reduce her guard to a few men at each fort, who could hoist the flag as a proof of supremacy, while the buildings could be disposed of for

trading purposes for a limited number of years on condition that the merchants kept them in repair<sup>41</sup>. The merchants also thought of the possibility of hiring the forts for a term of years with an option of buying them at a fixed price at any time during the term. The cost was expected to amount to £ 5-600 a year ; but the Colonial Office disapproved of this plan also, whilst Palmerstone now strongly recommended the purchase and declared himself willing to open the negotiations with Denmark<sup>42</sup>.

From the Danish government communications were made to Forster in London, partially through their financial agent there, Hambro, partially through the Danish minister, Count Reventlow, and finally it was intimated that the whole Danish interest on the African Coast could be had for £ 10,000. No wonder that Forster became filled with ardour to secure the forts for English enterprise ; he wrote to the Colonial Office : “ If Government should refuse them I tell you frankly that I should feel bound to propose an alternative to the Danish government, which while it relieve Denmark from the expense of maintaining them, shall temporarily, at all events, prevent them passing into the hands of a foreign power, an object so important with reference to the future destiny of that part of Africa that I shall spare neither trouble nor private risk to obtain it ”<sup>43</sup>. This communication gave the Office cause for reflection.

At length Count Reventlow, after having discussed it with Palmerston, represented a note of the 7. July, offering the possessions to England for £ 10,000 — everything included. He pointed out that the English merchants better than the Danes could exploit the resources of this vast territory, and that England more than anybody else would continue the struggle against the slave trade<sup>44</sup>. Palmerston repeated his recommendation ; at last the Colonial Office

was convinced, and a note was made on the paper : “ It appears... an opportunity not to be neglected ”.

Having obtained Winniett's opinion on the taxation and the annual cost of the maintenance <sup>45</sup> the Colonial Office sent a statement to the Treasury, which soon approved of it on condition that Parliament should sanction the purchase <sup>46</sup>. Considering that this could cause a long delay an agreement was made that Denmark should cede the forts as soon as possible in expectation of Parliament approving of it afterwards. The decisive conference took place on the 31. December 1849 between Palmerston and Reventlow, and a treaty was signed. The forts Christiansborg, Augustaborg, Fredensborg, Kongensten and Prinsensten with guns and stores were sold to England for £ 10.000 (ca. 90.000 Rigsbankdaler : ca. 180.000 Kroner) <sup>47</sup>. The bill concerned was passed through the House of Commons on the 19. July 1850 after an animated discussion between Cobden, Forster and Palmerston on the expediency of colonial expansion in tropical countries and on the expenditure to such colonies <sup>48</sup>. The ratifications were exchanged in London on the 11. September 1850, and the money paid <sup>49</sup>.

Already when the treaty was concluded Governor Carstensen had arrived to London, ready to follow Governor Winniett to the Coast in order to execute the transfer. As soon as they arrived Christiansborg was handed over on the 6. March 1850. In the meanwhile Carstensen became ill, and his assistant, Schionning, had to follow Winniett on a travel to the different forts and parts of the territory in order to accomplish the formal ceremonies. This journey lasted till the 21. March ; during the travel industrious Winniett kept a diary, which gives an interesting description of the whole territory and was afterwards sent home together with a list of the forts and their stores <sup>50</sup>. The Danish flag was lowered latest on the 30. March 1850 on a

little fort, Provesten, near Chistiansborg. The exertions of the journey were too much for the travellers ; Schionning died within short, and Winniett before the end of a year. Carstensen, who had remained at Christiansborg, escaped alive <sup>51</sup>.

Afterwards the British government undertook to pay some smaller aids to several pensioners and missionaries within the former Danish territory <sup>52</sup>, but everything considered one dare say that the English acquired these settlements for a comparative trifle, and that it was a great bargain. The Danes absolutely besought England to buy them. It is true that for a certain period it entailed expense and sacrifice to retain tropical colonies ; but in Denmark posterity cannot sufficiently repent that such a rich territory as this was practically presented to another country. It is now one of the most progressive parts of the Western Coast of Africa, providing a wealth of minerals, fruits and vegetables, and if Denmark had thought it expedient to retain it, it would no doubt have repaid abundantly the expenditure and human lives that it had cost.

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## CONCLUSION

While the transfer of the Indian possessions can be considered as a natural thing — almost a matter-of-course — from the English and the Danish side, and while a reasonable price was paid for Tranquebar and Serampore, the English purchase of the Danish Guinea Coast rather furnishes an example of how a great power makes use of the advantages with which it is endowed to make it more and more difficult for a little power to maintain possessions, and finally to exclude it altogether from the fields of its enterprise. The price for the forts was so modest that it can scarcely be called a price at all ; the transfer is hardly to be considered a purchase — the merchants would have paid much more.

To this it can be objected that many people in England did not want this expansion, that the acquisition was one of the examples of how the Empire was obliged to expand and this only upon condition the cost was trifling.

But English politics were conducted according to the desire of the merchants. The merchants understood how to make their cause the cause of the nation, and the nation could have afforded to offer a fair price. Denmark's need and internal English party-struggle worked together, when the price was fixed. Fair valuation had no influence.

While both these transactions were for England only little events in the growth of the British Empire, they were for Denmark essential steps towards the complete abandonment of her tropical colonies. It is true that the West

Indian Islands were still left ; but soon they, too, declined and caused a deficit, so that a disposition to sell them likewise appeared. The first negotiations of sale with the United States of America took place in the eighteen sixties. The sale was not effected until 1916-17.

The final transfer of the Danish West Indies was also achieved as the consequence of a great power being afraid, that another great power (Germany) should obtain them. Probably that is why small powers are not allowed to have colonies. One great power is afraid that another shall acquire them.

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## NOTES

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1. Generally speaking the history of the Danish tropical colonies is dealt with very unsatisfactorily. There is an out-of-date survey in Lannoy and van der Linden : *Histoire de l'expansion coloniale des peuples européens. Néerlande et Danemark*. Bruxelles, 1911.

Detailed, but little better than annals are three works by Kay Larsen : 1. *De dansk-ostindiske Koloniers Historie*. Kobenhavn. I : Tranquebar, 1907. II : De bengalske Loger. Nikobarerne, 1908 ; 2. *De danske i Guinea*. Kobenhavn, 1918 ; 3. *Dansk Vestindieu 1666-1917*. Kobenhavn, 1928.

The best book on the subject is Waldemar Westergaard ; *The Danish West Indies under Company Rule 1671-1757*. With a supplementary chapter 1757-1917. New-York 1917 (with a few inaccuracies concerning the home country).

2. Statistics : P. Hansen to Earl Auckland 17/1 1842. Board's Coll. 97.802 A. India Office. — On Tranquebar : F. R. Hemingway : *Tanjore*. Madras District Gazetteers, 1906. — On Serampore : L. S. S. O'Malley : *Hoogly*. Bengal District Gazetteers. Calcutta, 1912.

3. *Report of H. M.'s Commissioners of Inquiry on the State of the British Settlements on the Gold Coast at Sierra Leone and the Gambia, with some Observations on the Foreign Slave Trading Factories along the Western Coast of Africa in the year 1842*. Pg. 12. C. O. 267/171 (afterwards shortened : Madden). Also : Parl. Papers 1842. Reports from Committees, vol. XII, pg. 13-118.

4. Fitzpatrick to C. O. 10/6 1849. C. O. 96-15. On products from the Danish territory also : Bannermann to Hutton 19/12 1842. C. O. 96/2.

5. Letters from Generaltoldkammeret to Count Moltke 6/2 1841 and from Dept. for udenr. Anl. to Generaltoldkammeret 7/7 1841, both in the bundle : Dept. f. u. A. Alm. Korr. S. Ltr. Ö. Korrespon-

dancesager vedr. Ostindien II. Tranquebar 1800-46. The State Archive. Copenhagen (afterwards shortened : Da. Rigsarkiv) — Wynn to Foreign Office (F. O.) 31/1 1841. C. O. 267/167.

6. K. Larsen : *Guinea*, p. 101. — Governor & Council of Cape Coast Castle to Afr. Merch. 22/2 1816, copy in C. O. 267/54.

7. M. L. Nathanson : *Danmarks Handel, Skibsfart, Penge-og Finantsvæsen fra 1730 til 1830*. I. Kjobenhavn, 1832, pp. 233 and 325.

8. *Ibid.* p. 344, confirmed in : M. L. Nathanson : *Udforligere Oplysninger om Handels- og Finantsvæsenet i Christian VII's og Frederik VI's Regjeringslid*. Kjobenhavn 1832, p. 135.

9. The English and the Dutch on the Gold Coast made a separate peace with one another, concord being necessary against the natives ; the Danes were not included (C. O. 267/29).

10. W. W. Claridge when writing *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti*. 1/11. London 1915, did not know the Danish records, which, as he regrets, were moved to the State Archive of Copenhagen. It is an essential drawback about his work that the Danish possessions are so shortly dealt with, the more deplorable as his judgment seems to be sound and thrustworthy whenever the proper sources are at his disposal.

11. Claridge 1, p. 391. In the same year a letter to the Colonial Office says that it was doubtful whether British Accra belonged to the King of Ashanti or to another native prince, or whether the inhabitants were British subjects (Stephen to C. O. 5/5 1826. C. O. 267/77).

12. African Committee to C. O. 12/10 1830 and extract of a letter from Afr. Comm to the President & Council of Cape Coast Castle 11/10 1830. C. O. 267/106.

13. Afr. Merch. to C. O. 25/11 1835, including the correspondence between Morck and Maclean. C. O. 267/13.

14. Residents of British Accra to the President & Council of Cape Coast Castle 4/7 1836. F. O. 211/32.

15. Hutton & Nicholls to Stephen, C. O., 23/3 1843, enclosing Maclean to Nicholls 17/12 1842 ; Afr. Merch. to President & Council of Cape Coast Castle 8/6 1843. C. O. 96/2.

16. " Danish claims to Sovereignty of the Territoties adjoining the Danish settlements on the Gold Coast ", dated 13/3 1843. C. O. 96/3.

17. F. O. to Wynn 31/7 1843 with all enclosures, also extract of Dr. Madden's report. F. O. 211/38.

18. Fitzpatrick to C. O. 19/9 1849 enclosing R. E. Smidt, Christiansborg, to George Smith, Fort St. James, 16/5 1849 and Fitzpatrick to R. E. Smidt 5/6 1849. C. O. 96, 15. *British and Foreign State Papers* (afterwards shortened : Br. & For. St. P.) 1849-50, pp. 67 ff. contains the whole of the two last letters but only a fitting extract of the first one.

19. Br. & For. St. P. 1833-34, pp. 218 ff. F. O. 84/142 and 84/158. The Danes took care that the Ordinance of 1792 was praised in the preface of this treaty (F. O. to Wynn 7/7 1834. F. O. 84/158).

20. Wynn to Aberdeen 26/8 1828. Br. & For. St. P. 1828-29, p. 394. — " Browne to Aberdeen 23/6 1829. F. O. 84-94. — Wynn to Aberdeen 25/5 1830. F. O. 84/110.

21. Londonderry to Addington 26/3 1822. Br. & For. St. P. 1821-22, pp. 88 f. — Forster to Bathurst 10/9 1822. Br. & For. St. P. 1822-23, p. 271.

22. F. O. to Wynn 11/5 1841, Wynn to F. O. 15/7, 9/9 and 11/10 1841. F. O. 84/371. Br. & For. St. P. 1841-42, pp. 1012 ff. In 1842 there was a sensational affair concerning one of the consuls, Gaspari; he was, however, exculpated. (F. O. 84/413. Br. & For. St. P. 1842-43, pp. 55 ff. — Wynn to F. O. 3/5 1843. F. O. 84/474; the end of the case is not mentioned in Br. & For. St. P.).

23. *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords... Final Extinction of the African Slave Trade*. Session 1849, pp. 67 and 71.

24. Plenty of warrants in the Slave Trade Papers, F. O. 84, which have often been printed in parliamentary publications.

25. F. O. 84/205. Br. & For. St. P. 1835-36, pp. 286 ff. — In 1837 there was the case of Joseph Burgundy, a boy who had been sold from St. Christopher to St. Thomas (F. O. 24/224).

26. An unfinished document, beginning : " Agreeing in general with the report of Captain Columbine, there are nevertheless a few points on which I feel it incumbent on me to express an opinion, differing in some degree from his..." C. O. 267/29.

27. The Officiating Secretary to the Government of India (at Calcutta) to the Secretary to the Government of India with the Governor-General (at Agra) 15/4 1842. Enclosure in No. 15, 8/5 1843. Enclosures to Secret letters from India. Vol. 92. India Office.

28. Earl Grey : *The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration*. 1853. II, p. 282.

29. In 1835 a native prince within the English sphere of influence sacrificed 60 persons at his mother's funeral, yet not unpunished (C. O. 267/131. Claridge I. pp. 436 f.).

30. Board of Directors to the Governor-General of India in Council 1/7 1842. Secret Despatches 1842-43. vol. 8. Board's Records. India Office.

31. J. Scott-Keltie : *The Partition of Africa*. 1893. p. 96. — E. A. Benians in the *Cambridge Modern History* XII, p. 658. — S. Charlèty in Lavis : *Histoire de France contemporaine* V, p. 281. — R. P. Mowat and A. P. Newton in the *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy II*, p. 182 ff., 261 ff.

32. Chr. Schefer : *Le Monarchie de Juillet et l'expansion coloniale* (La Revue des Deux-Mondes, sept. 1912, pp. 177 ff.) and *Instructions générales données de 1763 à 1870 au gouverneurs... français en Afrique Occidentale II* (1927), pp. 133, 142, 146, 564-65.

33. The Accountant General to the Secretary of the Government of India 15/6 1841 ; the Accountant General of Fort St. George to the Secretary of the government of India 26/10 1841. Collection n° 97.802 A. Board's Collections, Vol. 2095. India Office.

34. Board to the Governor-General of India in Council 1/7 1842. Secret Despatches 1842-43. Vol. 8. Board's Records. India Office. Hansen had complained to Denmark, that the governor-general had no full-power, and a representation was made to the Board in London (Generaltk. og Comm. coll. to Dept. f. u. Anl. 2/4 1842, Dept. f. u. Anl. to Reventlow 9/4 1842. Da. Rigsark).

35. Kindersley to Ft. St. George, Madras, 22/11 1842. Enclosures to Secret Letters from India. Vol. 93. 1843. No. 4. India Office.

36. Secretary to the Government of India with the Governor-General (at Agra) to the Officiating Secretary to the Government of India (at Calcutta) 15/11 1842. Collection 97.802 A.

37. Officiating Secretary to the Government of India to the Secretary to the government of India with the Governor-General 5/4 1843 ; answer 17/4 1843. Enclosures to Secret Letters from India. Vol. 92. 1843. India Office. — Letter to Secret Committee No. 15, 8/5 1843. Collection 97.802 A.

38. The treaty is printed (with many errors in the Danish text) in : *A Collection of Treaties... Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*. Compiled by C. A. Aitchison. Vol. 1. 4. Edit. Calcutta 1909, pp. 250-54.

39. Montgomery, Collector of Tanjore, to the Chief Secretary of the Government of Ft. St. George 13/1 1846 and the Representation of the Negapatam Merchants 7/4 1846. Collection 119.426. Board's Collections 1848-49. Vol. 2309. India Office.

40. Bannermann to Hulton 19/12 1842. C. O. 96/2.

41. Carstensen to Hulton 7/10 1848. C. O. 96/14.

42. Eddisbury to Marivale 1/12 1848 with notes added. C. O. 96/13

43. Forster to C. O. 30/4 1849. 96/17.

44. Reventlow to F. O. 7/7. 1849. C. O. 96/17.

45. Letters from Winniett to C. O. C. O. 96/15. Br. and For. S<sup>t</sup> P. 1849-50 pp. 70 ff.

46. Trevelyan to Merivale 12/12 1849. C. O. 96/17. Br. and For. S<sup>t</sup> P. 1849-50. pp. 72 f.

47. F. O. 94/112. The treaty printed : Parl. Pap. *Accounts and Papers* 1851, LVII, pp. 1 f. ; Br. and For. S<sup>t</sup>-P. 1849-50, pp. 75 f. ; J. J. Crooks : *Records relating to the Gold Coast Settlements* 1750-1874, Dublin 1923, p. 332 ; K. Larsen : *Guinea* pp. 129 ff.

48. Hansard, 3. Series CXIII, 1850, pp. 37 ff.

49. F. O. to C. O. 14/9 1850. C. O. 96/20.

50. C. O. 96/18 ; Parl. Pap. *Accounts and Papers* 1850, XXXVIII, 3 ; Br. and For. S<sup>t</sup> P. 1849-59, pp. 80 ff.

51. K. Larsen : *Guinea*, p. 129.

52. Treasury to C. O. 30/7 1850. C. O. 96/20.



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